AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 10-15 and amend Claims 1-8, 16-17 and 19 as follows:

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for use in managing a call queue within a call center, said call queue for handling calls having a plurality of different call types that each have a corresponding service objective value, comprising the steps of:

receiving a new call from an exterior environment, said new call having a first call

5   type;

ascertaining a <u>first</u> service objective value associated with said new call based on said first call type;

<u>selecting a currently enqueued call in the call queue, the currently enqueued call having a second service objective value;</u>

10   <u>determining a first quality factor assuming that the new call is enqueued after the currently enqueued call;</u>

<u>determining a second quality factor assuming that the new call is enqueued in place of the currently enqueued call, said first quality factor reflecting the first and second service objective values; and</u>

15   ~~determining a position within the call queue for said new call based on said service objective value associated with said new call and a length of time that other calls have been in the call queue~~<u>comparing the first and second quality factors to determine a position within the call queue for the new call</u>.

2.   (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

~~said step of determining a position includes determining said position based on service objective values associated with said other calls~~<u>in said comparing step, when the second quality factor is less than the first quality factor, the new call is placed in the queue</u>

5   <u>position of the currently enqueued call and the currently enqueued call is moved to a later</u>

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queue position, and, when the second quality factor is not less than the first quality factor, the new call is not placed in the queue position of the currently enqueued call.

4.   (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of ~~determining a position~~ comparing includes calculating, for ~~a first~~ the currently enqueued call in a first queue position in said call queue, a ratio R_{CC} between an estimated total time in queue for the ~~first~~ currently enqueued call if the ~~first~~ currently enqueued call remains in the first queue position and ~~a~~ the second service objective value ~~associated with said first call~~.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 4, wherein:

said step of ~~determining a position~~ comparing includes determining a ratio R_{NC} between an estimated total time in queue for the new call in the first queue position and the first service objective value associated with the new call.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 5, wherein:

said step of ~~determining~~ comparing ~~a position~~ includes determining a ratio R_{CS} between an estimated total time in queue for the ~~first~~ currently enqueued call in a subsequent queue position within said call queue and the second service objective value ~~associated with the first call~~, wherein said subsequent queue position is a next queue position to said first queue position within said call queue.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 6, wherein:

said step of ~~determining a position~~ comparing includes determining a ratio R_{NS} between an estimated total time in queue for the new call in the subsequent queue position and the first service objective value ~~associated with the new call~~.

8.   (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 7, wherein:

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said step of ~~determining a position~~ <u>comparing</u> includes determining whether said new call should be placed in said first queue position within said call queue based on values for R_{CC}, R_{NC}, R_{CS}, and R_{NS}.

8. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 6, wherein:

said step of ~~determining a position~~ <u>comparing</u> includes ascertaining that said new call is to be placed in said first queue position when $|R_{NC}-R_{CS}| < |R_{NS}-R_{CC}|$.

9. (Original) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said plurality of different call types includes a plurality of vector directory numbers (VDNs) associated with incoming calls.

10-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A system for use in distributing incoming calls to a plurality of local agents in a call center, said system comprising:

a receiver for receiving incoming calls from an exterior environment;

a call queue unit for use in maintaining a queue of calls to be answered by the plurality of local agents, said queue having a plurality of successive queue positions including an initial queue position, said initial queue position for holding a call that is next in line to be answered by an agent in the plurality of local agents; and

a call positioning unit for positioning a new call received by said receiver within the queue, said call positioning unit determining a position within the queue for the new call based on a length of time that calls within the queue have been waiting to be answered<u>by determining a first quality factor assuming that the new call is enqueued in a first position in the queue and a second quality factor assuming that the new call is enqueued in a second, different position in the queue and comparing the relative values of the first and second quality factors.</u>

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17.   (Currently Amended) The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said first and second quality factors are determined using a service objective value
associated with the new call said call positioning unit determines said position for said new
call based on a service objective value associated with said new call.

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18.   (Original) The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit determines said position for said new call based on service
objective values associated with calls already within the queue.

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19.   (Currently Amended) The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit includes a comparison unit for comparing a the first quality
value associated with said new call to a the second quality value associated with a current
call within a first queue position to determine whether said new call should replace said
current call within said first queue position.

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20.   (Original) The system claimed in claim 16, wherein:

said call positioning unit includes an analysis unit for analyzing individual queue
positions within said queue, starting with said initial queue position, until a queue position
is found that meets a predetermined condition indicating that said new call should replace
an existing call within said queue position.

[[Please add the following new Claims 21-34:]

21.   (New) The method claimed in claim 2, wherein, when the second quality
factor is not less than the first quality factor, the comparing step comprises:

selecting a third call, the third call being currently enqueued, being different from the
currently enqueued call, being enqueued in a later queue position than the currently enqueued
call, and having an associated third service objective value;

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repeating the determining steps substituting the third call for the currently enqueued call.

22. (New) A computer readable medium comprising instructions to perform the steps of claim 1.

23. (New) A method for use in managing a call queue within a call center, comprising the steps of:

receiving a new call from an exterior environment;

selecting a currently enqueued call in the call queue;

5   determining a first quality factor assuming that the new call is enqueued after the currently enqueued call;

determining a second quality factor assuming that the new call is enqueued in place of the currently enqueued call, said first quality factor reflecting the first and second service objective values; and

10   comparing the first and second quality factors to determine a position within the call queue for the new call.

24. (New) The method claimed in claim 23, wherein the currently enqueued call has an associated second service objective value, the new call has an associated first service objective value, wherein said call queue handles calls having a plurality of different call types, said new call has a first call type, said currently enqueued call has a second call type, 5   the first service objective value is associated with the first call type, and the second service objective value is associated with the second call type.

25. (New) The method claimed in claim 23, wherein:

in said comparing step, when the second quality factor is less than the first quality factor, the new call is placed in the queue position of the currently enqueued call and the

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currently enqueued call is moved to a later queue position, and, when the second quality factor is not less than the first quality factor, the new call is not placed in the queue position of the currently enqueued call .

26. (New) The method claimed in claim 24, wherein:

said step of comparing includes calculating, for the currently enqueued call in a first queue position in said call queue, a ratio R_{CC} between an estimated total time in queue for the currently enqueued call if the currently enqueued call remains in the first queue position and the second service objective value, wherein the first quality factor is a function of the ratio R_{CC}.

27. (New) The method claimed in claim 26, wherein:

said step of comparing includes determining a ratio R_{NC} between an estimated total time in queue for the new call in the first queue position and the first service objective value associated with the new call, wherein the second quality factor is a function of the ratio R_{NC}.

28. (New) The method claimed in claim 27, wherein:

said step of comparing includes determining a ratio R_{CS} between an estimated total time in queue for the currently enqueued call in a subsequent queue position within said call queue and the second service objective value, wherein said subsequent queue position is a next queue position to said first queue position within said call queue, wherein the second quality factor is a function of the ratio R_{CS}.

29. (New) The method claimed in claim 28, wherein:

said step of comparing includes determining a ratio R_{NS} between an estimated total time in queue for the new call in the subsequent queue position and the first service objective value, wherein the first quality factor is a function of the ratio R_{NS}.

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30. [25] (New) The method claimed in claim 29 [24] wherein:

said step of comparing includes determining whether said new call should be placed in said first queue position within said call queue based on values for R_{CC}, R_{NC}, R_{CS}, and R_{NS}.

31. [26] (New) The method claimed in claim 29 [24], wherein:

said step of comparing includes ascertaining that said new call is to be placed in said first queue position when $|R_{NC}-R_{CS}| < |R_{NS}-R_{CC}|$.

32. [19] (New) The method claimed in claim 24 [18], wherein:

said plurality of different call types includes a plurality of vector directory numbers (VDNs) associated with incoming calls.

33. [20] (New) The method claimed in claim 24 [15], wherein, when the second quality factor is not less than the first quality factor, the comparing step comprises:

selecting a third call, the third call being currently enqueued, being different from the currently enqueued call, being enqueued in a later queue position than the currently enqueued call, and having an associated third service objective value;

repeating the determining steps substituting the third call for the currently enqueued call.

34. [28] (New) A computer readable medium comprising instructions to perform the steps claimed in claim 23 [17].

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